

REMARKS

Claims 1-70 are pending in the present application. Claims 1, 15, 44-63 and 65-67 have been amended in the present response.

In the Office Action mailed June 20, 2003, claims 1, 11, 12, 15-17, 22-24, 27, 43, 53, 54, 57-59, 64-66 and 68 were rejected, and claims 2-10, 13, 14, 18-21, 25, 26, 44-52, 55, 56, 60-63 and 67 were objected to. More specifically, the status of the application in light of this Office Action is as follows:

- (A) The specification was objected to because of several informalities;
- (B) Claims 1, 44-63 and 65-67 were objected to because of several informalities;
- (C) Claims 15-21 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph;
- (D) Claims 1, 11, 12, 15-17, 22-24, 27, 43, 53, 54, 57-59, 64-66 and 68 were rejected under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 1-61 of U.S. Patent No. 6,309,520;
- (E) Claims 1, 11, 12, 15-17, 22-24 and 27 were rejected under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 1-39 of U.S. Patent No. 6,309,524;
- (F) Claims 1, 11, 15, 16, 22, 23, 27, 43, 53, 57, 58, 64, 65 and 68 were provisionally rejected under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 1-42 of U.S. Patent Application No. 09/998,142;
- (G) Claims 2-10, 13, 14, 18, 19-21, 25, 26, 44-52, 55, 56, 60-63 and 67 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but were indicated to be allowable if rewritten in independent form to include the features of the claims from which they depend;

(H) Claims 28-42, 69 and 70 were allowed; and

(I) Claims 15-21 were indicated to be allowable if amended to overcome the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph.

A. Response to the Specification Objection

The specification was objected to because of several informalities. The specification has been amended in this response to incorporate the Examiner's suggestions. More specifically, on page 6 at line 15, "Figure 8" has been changed to "Figure 7"; on page 12 at line 19, the thickness has been changed from "0.2-0.4" to "0.02-0.04"; and on page 15 at lines 12, 13 and 17, "seal 510" has been changed to "seal 508."

B. Response to the Objection of Claims 1, 44-63 and 65-67

Claims 1, 44-63 and 65-67 were objected to because of several informalities. Claims 1, 44-63 and 65-67 have been amended in this response to incorporate the Examiner's suggestions, correct typographical errors, and/or clarify aspects of these claims, without narrowing the scope of these claims. More specifically, claim 1 has been amended to insert "the" before "opening"; claims 44-56, 58-63 and 65-67 have been amended to change the preamble from "contact assembly" to "reactor system"; and claim 57 has been amended to insert "a" before "lip." Accordingly, the objection to claims 1, 44-63 and 65-67 should be withdrawn.

C. Response to the Section 112 Rejection

Claims 15-21 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph. Claim 15 has been amended to delete "the lip," which the Examiner noted lacked an antecedent basis. Accordingly, the Section 112 rejection of claim 15 should be withdrawn.

Claims 16-21 depend from claim 15. Accordingly, the Section 112 rejection of claims 16-21 should be withdrawn for the reasons discussed above with reference to claim 15.

D. Response to the Double Patenting Rejection over U.S. Patent No. 6,309,520

Claims 1, 11, 12, 15-17, 22-24, 27, 43, 53, 54, 57-59, 64-66 and 68 were rejected under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 1-61 of U.S. Patent No. 6,309,520. The enclosed terminal disclaimer overcomes this nonstatutory double patenting rejection. Accordingly, claims 1, 11, 12, 15-17, 22-24, 27, 43, 53, 54, 57-59, 64-66 and 68 should be allowed. Applicants file this terminal disclaimer to expedite allowance of the pending claims without expressly or impliedly admitting that the pending claims are in fact unpatentable over the claims of U.S. Patent No. 6,309,520.

E. Response to the Double Patenting Rejection over U.S. Patent No. 6,309,524

Claims 1, 11, 12, 15-17, 22-24 and 27 were rejected under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 1-39 of U.S. Patent No. 6,309,524. The enclosed terminal disclaimer overcomes this nonstatutory double patenting rejection. Accordingly, claims 1, 11, 12, 15-17, 22-24 and 27 should be allowed. Applicants file this terminal disclaimer to expedite allowance of the pending claims without expressly or impliedly admitting that the pending claims are in fact unpatentable over the claims of U.S. Patent No. 6,309,524.

F. Response to the Double Patenting Rejection over U.S. Patent Application No. 09/998,142

Claims 1, 11, 15, 16, 22, 23, 27, 43, 53, 57, 58, 64, 65 and 68 were provisionally rejected under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 1-42 of U.S. Patent Application No. 09/998,142. The enclosed terminal disclaimer overcomes this nonstatutory double patenting rejection. Accordingly, claims 1, 11, 15, 16, 22, 23, 27, 43, 53, 57, 58, 64, 65 and 68 should be allowed. Applicants file this terminal disclaimer to expedite allowance of the pending claims without expressly or impliedly admitting that the pending claims are in fact unpatentable over the claims of U.S. Patent Application No. 09/998,142.

G. Indication of Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 2-10, 13, 14, 18, 19-21, 25, 26, 44-52, 55, 56, 60-63 and 67 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but were indicated to be allowable if rewritten in independent form to include the features of the claims from which they depend. These claims have not been rewritten in independent form because their respective independent claims should now be in a condition for allowance for the reasons described above.

H. Claims 28-42, 69 and 70 Were Allowed

Claims 28-42, 69 and 70 were allowed. Although the applicants' attorney agrees with the Examiner's conclusion that many of the claims in this application are allowable, the applicants' attorney notes that the claims may be allowable for reasons other than those identified by the Examiner and does not concede that the Examiner's characterization of the terms of the claims and the prior art are correct.

I. Indication of Allowable Subject Matter

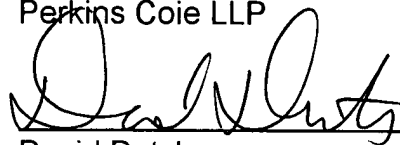
Claims 15-21 were indicated to be allowable if amended to overcome the Section 112 rejection. Claim 15 has been amended accordingly, and therefore, claim 15 should be allowed. Claims 16-21 depend from claim 15 and should therefore also be allowed.

J. Conclusion

In light of the foregoing amendments and remarks, all the pending claims are in condition for allowance. Applicants, therefore, request reconsideration of the application and an allowance of all pending claims. If the Examiner notices any informalities in the claims, he is encouraged to contact David Dutcher to expediently correct any such informalities.

Respectfully submitted,

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Date: Nov. 18, 2003

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